



Satellite image with enhanced low cloud-top temperatures (degrees C) for 7:15 a.m. EDT (NOAA)

### **Agricultural Weather Highlights - Wednesday - December 18, 2002**

- ***In the West***, rain and snow showers continue across the ***Pacific Northwest*** and the ***Intermountain region***, providing additional drought relief to rangelands and winter grains, and further improving high-elevation snow packs. Meanwhile, dry weather is temporarily overspreading ***California***.
- ***On the Plains***, snowy, breezy conditions are developing across the ***Dakotas***, providing beneficial moisture but increasing stress on livestock. Farther west, however, mild, mostly dry weather persists on the drought-affected ***northern and central High Plains***, leaving much of the winter wheat crop exposed to potential weather extremes.
- ***In the Corn Belt***, rain is boosting topsoil moisture reserves, but ending a long-period of dry weather that favored off-season fieldwork. Temperatures remain at or below the freezing mark (32 degrees F) in portions of the ***lower Great Lakes region***, resulting in some freezing rain and poor travel conditions.
- ***In the South***, showers and locally severe thunderstorms are developing across the ***lower Mississippi Valley*** in advance of a cold front. Elsewhere, wet fields continue to hamper fieldwork from the ***western Gulf Coast region to the Atlantic Coast***, despite a recent spell of warm, dry weather.

**Outlook:** Later today, a cold front will bring widespread rain and locally severe thunderstorms to the ***middle and lower Mississippi Valley***, while snow is likely in the ***north-central U.S.*** As the cold front moves eastward, showers will spread across the ***Ohio Valley and Southeast***, reaching the ***East Coast*** on Friday. By week's end, another strong storm Pacific storm will result in heavy rain, mountain snow, and high winds in the ***West Coast States***. The NWS 6-10 day outlook for December 23-27 calls for below-normal precipitation in the ***Pacific Northwest*** and ***upper Midwest***, but wet conditions are expected across the ***southern half of the nation***. Below-normal temperatures are forecast across the ***western half of the U.S.***, while above-normal temperatures are expected in ***Florida***.

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